

Message Text

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FOR: IBS/PF; VOA; IPS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA RECAUTION: DIEGO GARCIA

1. BURMESE PRESS MADE EXTENSIVE USE MARCH 14 OF WIRE STORIES ON DIEGO GARCIA WITH EMILISH WORKING PEOPLE'S DAILY GROUPING "U.S. NOTES INDIA'S OPPOSITION TO 'KITTY HAWK'S PRESENCE" AP; "INDIA NIQXGALL FOR CONFERENCE OF NAVAL POWER" UPI; "U.S. MOTIVE IN EXPANDING NAVAL PRESENCE" UPI BASED ON NOYES TESTIMONY; AND "DIEGO GARCIA CAN HANDLE 'B-52S'" AFP BASED ON MOORER TESTIMONY. COVERAGE IN BURMESE LANGUAGE PRESS BASED ON ABOVE. NO LOCAL COMMENT.

2. THE BURMESE LANGUAGE BURMA SOCIALIST PROGRAM PARTY MACH 1 ISSUE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER (CIRC. 70,000) CARRIED FULL PAGE STORY ON DIEGO GARCIA. SUMMARY EXCERPTS FOLLOW:

3. EXPANSION OF MILITARY BASE IN DIEGO GARCIA MOST ASIAN NATIONS ARE PROTESTING THE EXPANSION OF U.S. NAVAL FACILITIES ON THE BRITISH OWNED DIEGO GARCIA ISLAND IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

4. THE INDIAN OCEAN IS A DIRECT LINK BETWEEN THE ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC OCEANS. MILITARILY, IT IS IN A STRATEGIC POSITION AND ECONOMICALLY IT SERVES THE MAJOR DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO ACQUIRE
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RAW MATERIALS INCLUDING OIL FROM THE PERSIAN GULF AND COASTAL

NATIONS.

5. DIEGO GARCIA ISLAND IS SITUATED BETWEEN MAURITIUS ACWD SRI LANKA AND 1000 MILES SOUTH OF INDIA. ABOUT 14 MILES LONG IT HAS A RUNWAY OF 2000 FEET WHICH CAN BE USED BY AIR FORCE PLANES. AROUND THE ISLAND THERE ARE FACILITIES FOR NAVY SHIPS.

6. PROGRAM FOR EXPANSION
BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES DISCUSSED THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE ISLAND IN 1965 AND IN 1970 AGREED TO BUILD AN AIR BASE AND NAVAL FACILITIES ON THE ISLAND. ON FEBRUARY 7, 1974 THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED WITH THE BRITISH TO EXPAND THE EXISTING FACILITIES.

7. MAJOR POWERS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN
WITH THE GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH MILITARY BASES FROM THE FAR EAST AFTER 1968, THE SOVIET UNION AND THE U.S. MADE ENDEAVOURS TO FILL THE GAP CREATED BY THE BRITISH. SOVIET NAVY SHIPS BEGAN ENTERING THE INDIAN OCEAN AFTER 1968 ALTHOUGH IT HAD NO NAVAL BASES. IN 1971 WHEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN WERE AT WAR OVER BANGLADESH BOTH U.S. AND SOVIET NAVY SHIPS WERE IN PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

8. THE INDIAN OCEAN NATIONS DESIRE THAT THE INDIAN OCEAN BE RECOGNIZED AS A PEACE ZONE. SRI LANKA HAS SUBMITTED PROPOSALS AT THE 26TH, 27TH AND 28TH U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLIES CALLING UPON MAJOR POWERS TO CONSULT AMONG THEMSELVES TO ELIMINATE MILITARY BASES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

9. PROTESTS
SRI LANKA, INDIA, INDONESIA, BANGLADESH AND THE DEMOCRATIC

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN AND PROTESTED AGAINST EXPANSION OF NAVAL FACILITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA. MALAYSIA HAS ALSO CRIZED THE MAJOR POWERS FOR NAVAL DEPLOYMENTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. (END EXCERPTS)
HANSON

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